

What is claimed is:

1. A method for fabricating a fluidic system, comprising:

depositing a floor layer on the top surface of a substrate;

depositing a sacrificial layer on the top surface of said floor layer;

5        patterning said sacrificial layer to define in the sacrificial layer the shape of a  
desired fluid working gap;

depositing a ceiling layer to cover said sacrificial layer; and

removing said sacrificial layer from between said floor layer and said ceiling  
layer to produce said working gap.

10        2. The method of claim 1, wherein removing said sacrificial layer includes:

providing at least one access hole leading to said sacrificial layer; and

etching said sacrificial layer through said at least one access hole.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein providing said at least one access hole includes

forming at least one hole through said ceiling layer to said sacrificial layer.

4. The method of claim 3, further including depositing a sealing layer over said ceiling layer to close said at least one access hole.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein patterning includes:

defining in said sacrificial layer the boundaries of a fluid chamber working gap;

5 and

defining within the boundaries of said fluid chamber a multiplicity of holes extending through said sacrificial layer to said dielectric floor layer.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein depositing said ceiling layer includes depositing the ceiling layer in said multiplicity of holes to define obstacles in said working gap.

10 7. The method of claim 6, wherein removing said sacrificial layer includes etching said sacrificial layer between said obstacles in said working gap to produce an artificial gel.

8. The method of claim 1, further including, after depositing said dielectric ceiling layer:

patterning and etching said ceiling layer to form a ridge waveguide

intersecting the location of a desired fluid working gap;

5 patterning and etching said ceiling layer to define at least one access hole

leading to said sacrificial layer; and

thereafter removing said sacrificial layer by etching.

9. A method for fabricating a multilevel fluidic device, comprising:

forming a first floor layer; depositing a first sacrificial layer on the top surface

10 of said floor layer;

patterning said sacrificial layer to define in the sacrificial layer the shape of a

desired fluid working gap;

depositing a ceiling layer to cover said sacrificial layer;

patterning said second sacrificial layer to define in the second sacrificial layer a

15 second desired fluid gap;

depositing a second ceiling layer to cover said second sacrificial layer; and  
removing said sacrificial layers to produce multilevel working gaps.

10. The method of claim 9, further including depositing additional patterned  
sacrificial and ceiling layers sequentially to produce additional working gap levels.

5 11. The method of claim 10, further including producing at least one vertical  
connector hole through a ceiling layer to interconnect adjacent sacrificial layers.

12. The method of claim 11, further including producing at least one vertical  
connector hole through each ceiling layer that receives a sacrificial layer on each level  
to the sacrificial layer on a next adjacent layer.

10 13. The method of claim 12, wherein removing said sacrificial layers includes:  
providing at least one access hole leading to at least one of said sacrificial  
layers; and

etching all said sacrificial layers through said at least one access hole and said  
at least one vertical connector between each level.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein providing said at least one access hole includes  
forming at least one access hole through the topmost ceiling layer to the sacrificial  
layer covered by said topmost ceiling layer.

15. The method of claim 14, further including depositing a sealing layer over said  
second ceiling layer to close said at least one access hole.

16. The method of claim 9, wherein patterning includes:

defining in at least one of said sacrificial layer and said second sacrificial layer  
the boundaries of at least one fluid chamber working gap; and  
defining within the boundaries of said at least one fluid chamber a multiplicity  
of holes extending through a corresponding sacrificial layer.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein depositing said first and second dielectric ceiling layers includes depositing the ceiling layer in said multiplicity of holes to define obstacles in said at least one fluid working gap.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein removing said sacrificial layer and said second sacrificial layer includes etching said between said obstacles in said at least one working gap to produce an artificial gel.

19. The method of claim 9, further including, after depositing said ceiling layer:  
patterning and etching said ceiling layer to form a ridge waveguide

intersecting the location of a desired fluid working gap; and

patterning and etching said ceiling layer to define at least one access hole leading to said sacrificial layer.

20. The method of claim 1, further including fabricating on said substrate a device for interconnection with said working gap.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein fabricating said device is carried out by a process compatible with the process of fabricating said working gap.

22. The method of claim 21, further including interconnecting said working gap with said device to allow fluid transfer between said gap and said device.

23. A method for fabricating a nanochannel, comprising:

    patterning and etching a substrate to produce a surface having a vertical sidewall intersecting the substrate at the base of the sidewall;

    depositing a thin film conformal sacrificial layer on said substrate and covering said sidewall, the thickness of the thin film at the base of the sidewall having an

increased thickness and width to form a sacrificial wire along the base;

    removing by an unmasked RIE the thin film sacrificial layer on the sidewall and on the substrate, while leaving said sacrificial wire along said base;

    depositing a ceiling layer on said substrate and said sidewall and covering said wire; and

removing said sacrificial wire to produce a nanochannel between said substrate, sidewall, and ceiling layer.

24. A method for forming a nanochannel, comprising:

depositing a thin film silicon sacrificial layer on a substrate;

5        patterning said silicon layer to define a sacrificial wire having the shape of a desired nanochannel;

oxidizing the patterned sacrificial silicon layer to reduce the width and height of the sacrificial wire bay consuming silicon from the surface of the wire to form a silicon oxide coating; and

10        removing the sacrificial wire from within said silicon oxide coating to produce a nanochannel.